

REMARKS

The above amendments and these remarks are responsive to the Office action dated June 15, 2004. In the Office action, claims 8-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) based on U.S. Pat. No. 6,447,351 to Nanami, and claims 1-7 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) based on Nanami. In view of the amendments above, and the remarks below, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111 and allowance of the pending claims.

Claim 1

Due to the limited internal space in the engine compartment of personal watercraft, it is typically difficult to extend or lengthen the air-intake pipes. However, according to the claimed invention in amended claim 1, air-intake pipes are provided laterally of the engine in a compact configuration, by arranging the air-intake pipes such that "a distance between respective central axes of the second opening end portions is smaller than a distance between respective central axes of the first opening end portions." This configuration overcomes the challenge of extending or lengthening the air-intake pipes downward at a location lateral to the engine.

One example of such a configuration is shown in annotated Fig. 4 below. The center-to-center distance D2 between respective central axes of the second opening end portions is smaller than the center-to-center distance D1 between respective central axes of the first opening end portions. As a result, the effective length of each intake pipe is increased.

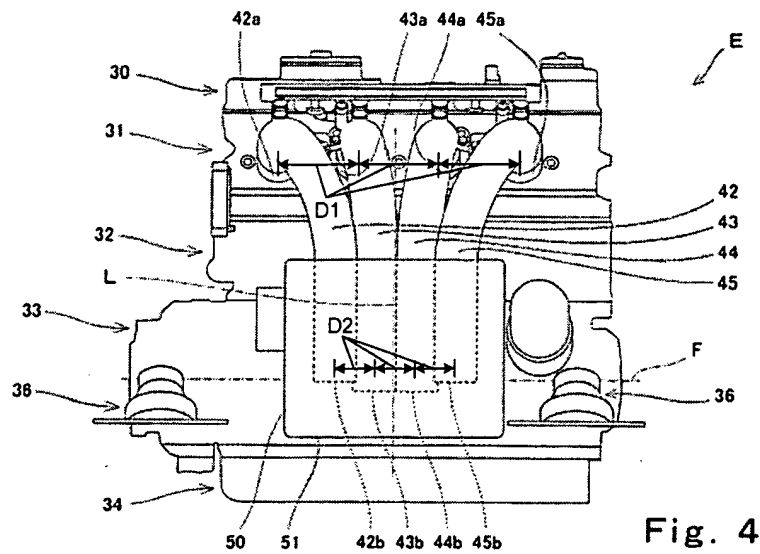


Fig. 4

Fig. 4 of Subject Application (Annotated)

In contrast, Nanami discloses straight air-intake pipes 162 in parallel with each other, as shown in Fig. 3 reproduced below.

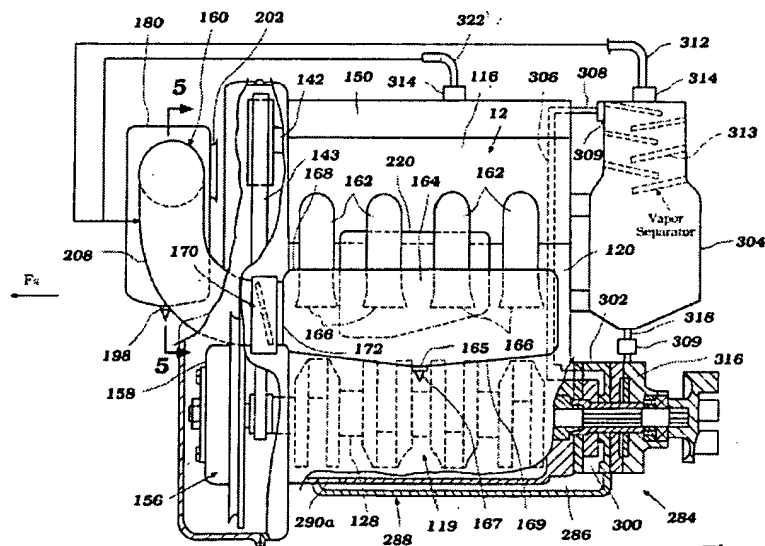


Figure 3

Fig. 3 of Nanami

Nanami does not disclose or suggest providing intake pipes in the claimed configuration, in combination with the other elements recited in claim 1, and therefore applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is allowable.

Claims 2-3, 5-7

Claim 4 has been cancelled without prejudice. Claim 5 has been amended to clarify the structural features of the second opening end portions of the air-intake pipes into which air is drawn in successive order.

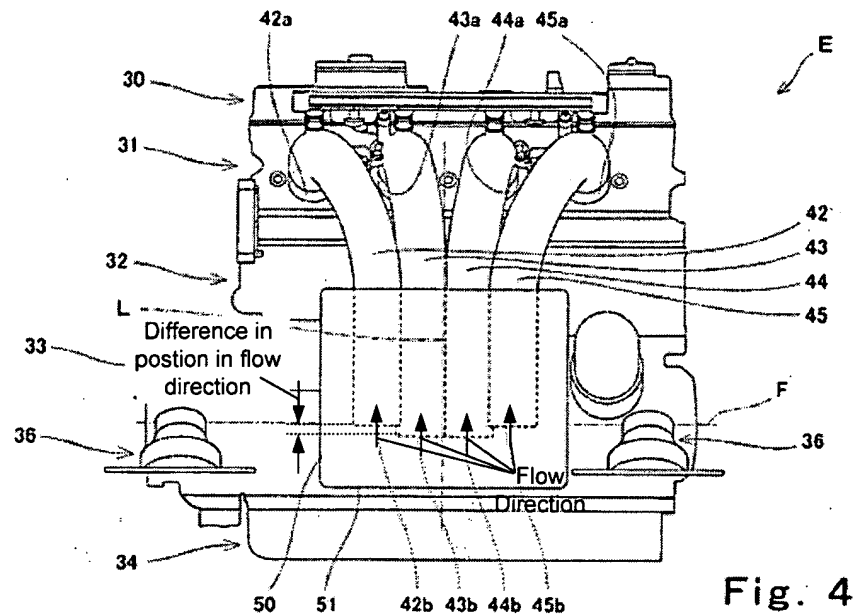
Regarding claim 7, applicants respectfully submit that “integrally molded” is a structural limitation referring to an element formed of a common unitary piece of material, not to a method of manufacture. This term, as well as other verbs, including “bent,” “notched,” “channeled,” etc., are often used in patent claims, not to refer to a particular method of manufacture, but to refer to a structural feature itself. Nevertheless, applicants have amended claim 7 to clarify that the air-intake pipes are “integral with the air-intake box,” that is, that their structure is formed from a common, unitary piece of material.

In view of the above amendments to claim 1, as each of claims 2-3 and 5-7 depends from claim 1, applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-3 and 5-7 are allowable.

Claim 8

In a manner consistent with claim 5, claim 8 has been amended to recite that “the second opening end portions of two adjacent air-intake pipes into which air is drawn in successive order are located at different positions in a flow direction of the air within the

second opening end portions.” One example of such a configuration is shown in annotated Fig. 4, reproduced below.



Nanami – Fig. 4 (Annotated)

In contrast, Nanami discloses adjacent air intake pipes that are the same length. Nanami makes no mention whatsoever that adjacent air intake pipes could be configured to have end portions that have different positions in a flow direction of the air flowing therethrough. For this reason, applicants respectfully submit that claim 8 is allowable.

Claim 9-11

Claims 9-11 depend from claim 8 and are also believed allowable.

Claims 12-13

Applicants further present new claims 12 and 13 which depend from claim 11, and are also believed allowable.

Applicants believe that this application is now in condition for allowance, in view of the above amendments and remarks. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

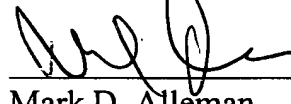
I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail, postage prepaid, to: Mail Stop AMENDMENT, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 on October 8, 2004.



Josi Bridges

Respectfully submitted,

KOLISCH HARTWELL, P.C.



Mark D. Alleman

Registration No. 42,257

Customer No. 23581

Attorney/Agent for Applicant(s)/Assignee

520 S.W. Yamhill Street, Suite 200

Portland, Oregon 97204

Telephone: (503) 224-6655

Facsimile: (503) 295-6679